

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

DD/A REGIS 71

FROM:

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1. ADDA
7-D-24 Hqs.

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1) Bill, one of the items on the agenda of the 19 March Language Development Committee will be an updating on the OPPPM Task Force on Linguists. The attached should be pretty close to the final report which will recommend that the Executive Committee restore the language awards to the language specialists because the Task Force found no suitable substitute.

H/L

DD/A REGIS 71

FILE: Training - 4

Staff Study on the Classification and
Compensation of Language Specialists

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this paper is to define language specialists, and to recommend that incentives for language specialists continue to be awarded through the Language Incentive Program (LIP), as it is presently constituted.

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II. Background:

A. In November 1979 the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies issued the text of its final report to the President entitled "Strength Through Wisdom - A Critique of U.S. Capability." Pointing to the fact that it had found "a serious deterioration in this country's language and research capacity, at a time when an increasingly hazardous international military, political and economic environment is making unprecedented demands on America's resources, intellectual capacity and public sensitivity," the Commission called on the President to "set an agenda for action in these areas of national need" and made a number of recommendations to repair this deficiency in both the private and public sector. Among these recommendations: "The U.S. government should achieve 100% compliance in filling positions designated as requiring foreign language proficiency, review criteria for such designation in order to strengthen the government's foreign language capability, and evaluate the career systems of foreign affairs agencies to ensure adequate career incentives for obtaining and retaining foreign language and area expertise."

B. In October 1979 working in parallel with and responsive to the activities of the Presidential Commission, CIA established the present Language Incentive Program (LIP) "to encourage the development and maintenance of foreign language skills to support Agency activities" and "to reward actual job-related utilization of foreign languages." [REDACTED] 25X1

That this DCI-directed action occurred in tandem with and in response to the work of the Presidential Advisory Commission is evident in the terms of a 26 March 1979 letter from the DCI to Dr. Brzezinski in which he states: "I totally share your concern for the state of international education in the United States and especially the implications with respect to national security. I heartily endorse the establishment of a Presidential Commission to look at our national needs in this area, and a landmark study may be useful depending on how it is carried out. As you know, the quality of US intelligence depends in no small measure on our ability to hire well-educated foreign area specialists and linguists, and we are especially interested in increasing the quality of advanced research on foreign areas."

C. To meet the LIP requirement for an annual review to assess its effectiveness, in July 1980 the Agency [REDACTED] 25X1

25X1 [REDACTED] conduct the first annual review.

25X1 As a result of the [REDACTED] report on the Agency's LIP, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, at the Executive Committee meeting of 24 November 1980, charged the D/PPPM with defining those personnel hired principally for their language skills (that is, "language specialists"), and with establishing a Task Force by 1 January 1981 to review and report on the classification and compensation of language specialists by 1 April 1981. [REDACTED] 25X1

D. Specifically, the Executive Committee approved the ☐

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recommendation that "persons hired or appointed to their present positions, based primarily on their language skills, should be excluded from the Language Use Award (LUA), Language Achievement Award (LAA), and Language Maintenance Award (LMA) in the language or mutually intelligible languages upon which that appointment was based" and directed that the Task Force "report on-job classification, career opportunities, or special salary rates to be established in lieu of LUAs," with the LUAs for language specialists being "discontinued upon the implementation of the decisions made on the basis of the Task Force recommendation." The Executive Committee also approved the ☐ recommendation that the LUAs be continued as an element of the LIP, but that participation be limited "to full-time positions overseas in which a language is essential," amending this recommendation to allow personnel in ☐ DDS&T-designated slots to continue receiving LUAs. ☐

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E. The Task Force on Language Specialists, having reviewed the charge of the Executive Committee and having met on 16 December 1980 and 9 and 25 February 1981, reached agreement on the employment categories that constitute language specialists, discussed the career opportunities available to language specialists, and discussed proposals for alternative ways to compensate language specialists if they are excluded from the three types of language awards. ☐

III. Present Policy and Procedures:

The CIA Language Incentive Program, intended to reward job-related use of foreign languages and encourage achievement and maintenance of proficiency in foreign languages, is currently available to all full-time staff employees, staff agents, career associates, contract employees, and

part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week. The LIP presently consists of three awards -- the Language Use, Language Achievement, and Language Maintenance Awards. LUAs take the form of an addition to compensation of \$50 per biweekly pay period to those employees, filling Unit Language Requirement (ULR) positions designated by their Directorates, who have been tested to have at least Minimum Professional Proficiency (Level 3) in the required language and skill; and \$25 per biweekly pay period to those employees, filling ULR positions designated by their Directorates, who have been tested at Level 2-2+. At present, 286 language specialists are receiving LUAs. LAAs and LMAs are lump-sum payments of varying amounts to those employees, designated as participants in the program by their Directorates, who have been tested or certified to have a proficiency level in the specified incentive language. ☐

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IV. Discussion of Options:

A. Throughout its deliberations on these matters, the Task Force has come up sharply against the illogic inherent in the ☐ recommendation that the Agency disqualify language specialists from participation in the LIP and at the same time identify some other form of incentive to replace it. The ☐ reasoning was based on the premise that it was inappropriate to reward language specialists further for the skill for which they were hired. Logically defensible in itself, this position simply could not coexist with the companion recommendation to replace the LIP with some other form of premium. If it was wrong to provide additional compensation to language specialists in any continuing manner beyond their normal rate of pay, then it would be equally wrong to provide additional compensation in the form of bonuses, special wage scales, job upgradings or any other

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form of extra compensation. If there is no compelling ground for additional recognition, then there is not and never was, compelling ground for a language incentive program for language specialists.

B. The discussion below of options for replacing the LIP for language specialists illustrates the difficulty of mating these two recommendations: it is simply not possible to envisage a replacement which would not be some form of incentive award to language specialists for the skills for which they were hired. Further, each alternate option entailed inequities, difficulties of administration, and costs exceeding any similar flaws in the existing system. Still further, creation of an alternate system solely for language specialists would create administrative havoc as eligible officers moved from one program to another.

V. Options:

A. Continue rewarding language specialists through the LIP, as currently constituted. ☐

1. Arguments for this solution are primarily a) the mandate of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies; b) the morale of the employees who see the awards as the first sign of long-deserved recognition; c) the value of the awards as both a recruitment incentive and an incentive to language specialists to remain in components doing the language-related work they prefer. ☐

2. Arguments against this solution are primarily a) the inappropriateness of further rewarding language specialists for the skill for which they were hired; and include b) the fact that this could set a precedent for every other specialist who might want monetary recognition, and c) the refusal by some language specialists to rotate to any position not identified as a ULR, thereby stifling both the growth of the employee and the needs of the Agency. ☐

B. Continue rewarding language specialists through the LIP, but only for those languages for which the Agency is unable to find sufficient numbers of specialists. ☐

1. Arguments for this solution are the same as in A.1. -- [the need to upgrade national language assets,] the morale of those who would continue to get awards, as well as the use of the awards as recruitment and retention incentives. An additional argument in this case, however, is that a selective awards program would be directed toward the critical language needs of the Agency, rewarding those people who fill those needs, and encouraging further study in those specific languages. ☐

2. Except for the precedent-setting consideration in A.2.b., arguments against this solution are the same as in A.2. -- the inappropriateness of further rewards, and the refusal to rotate. The exception is made because it would be clear from the fact that this awards program is selective that the skill was being rewarded only because it was of critical need. In fact, in this case, a refusal to accept a rotation might be a plus for the Agency, as the critical skill would be retained. Another argument against this solution is also apparent -- the morale [and perception of inequity on the part] of those language specialists in non-critical languages whose awards would be discontinued. ☐

C. Continue rewarding language specialists through the LIP, but vary the amount of the LUA according to the application of the language proficiency to the tasks of the job, so as to make the awards competitive. ☐

1. The argument for this solution is the obvious one of the equity of rewarding an employee for his or her performance rather than granting a blanket reward to all those who have tested at a certain level in a language, regardless of whether the test measures the knowledge needed for the position. ☐

25X1 2. The argument against this solution is the difficulty in administering such a program. ☐

25X1 D. Discontinue the LIP for language specialists, but institute a separate salary scale for them. ☐

1. The argument for this solution is that all language specialists would continue to receive recognition for their skills, but that this recognition would not be in the form of an incentive award for the very skills for which they were hired. ☐

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2. The arguments against this solution are a) that it cannot be shown that there is a lack of language-qualified candidates either for CIA or, it appears, for other Government agencies, as the Office of Personnel Management has not established a special language pay scale; b) although the option to employ this solution does exist under the special authorities of the Director of Central Intelligence, past DCIs have been reluctant to use their special authorities for this purpose, and the General Counsel has been equally reluctant to have them do so; [and c) that it is the LIP by another name.] ☐

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25X1 E. Discontinue the LIP for language specialists, but upgrade language-specialist positions. ☐

1. The argument for this solution is the same as that for D.1. -- recognition would continue, but the granting of an award to someone for the skill for which they were hired would cease. ☐

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2. The arguments against this solution are a) that the CIA salary structure for language specialists already exceeds that of most of the rest of the Government, and PMCD sees no possibility of further grade enhancement for this category of employees; b) that if this measure

were taken for language specialists, there would be a rippling effect to other employees; and c) that such a solution would only solve the problem for 18 to 28 months, after which the salary structure would again begin to even out; [and d) that it would be the LIP by another name.] ☐

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F. Discontinue the LIP for language specialists, but bring them on board at a higher step within the grade at which they are hired. ☐

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1. The argument for this solution is similar to that for D.1. -- recognition, but no award for the same skill as that hired for.

In this case, the recognition would be implicit in the hiring process. ☐

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2. The argument against this solution is that only those employees not yet hired would be eligible for the increment, thus [*] causing a grave morale problem for those now on board who are receiving the awards. ☐ [*deleted "potentially"]

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G. Discontinue the LIP for language specialists, but institute a retention bonus or some other kind of incentive system for them. ☐

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1. The argument for this solution is again the same as that for D.1. -- recognition, but no award for the same skill as that hired for. ☐

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2. The argument against this solution is again that of the inappropriateness of rewarding a specialist for the skill for which he or she was hired -- as this would essentially be the same solution as the current LIP, with a different name, it would make more sense to retain the current program. ☐

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VI. Task Force Position:

A. The Task Force agreed that those employment categories constituting "language specialists" include Intelligence Officer-Foreign Documents, Scientific Linguist, Translator, [*], Transcriber, Translator-Supervisor, and Instructor-Foreign Language. ☐ [*deleted "Media Analyst"]

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currently exist for Intelligence Officers-Foreign Documents. No such opportunities exist for other language specialists, although the DDO representatives stated that they would be willing to design a career development profile for their personnel. Furthermore, an examination of the career tracks of language specialists has revealed that there is a great deal of movement within offices and transfers from one office to another, in many cases leading to new careers and higher grades. ☐

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C. The Task Force, having reviewed and discussed all of the options just presented, concluded that each would be in some sense a continuation of the LIP, inasmuch as all of them would indeed provide special recognition for the language skill for which the person was hired. It further concluded that each would entail inequities, difficulties of administration, and costs which could exceed any now obtaining with the LIP. Task Force discussions found no significant perception of inequity among nonparticipating components respecting the LIP and that participating components, far from considering it controversial, as the ☐ report states, regard it as a welcome signal of the value placed by Agency management upon their skills and contributions. The perception of inequity would on the contrary occur among those who might be disqualified from continued participation in the program. In the light of the severely demoralizing effect of discontinuance of these awards; in cognizance of the recommendations of the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies, ☐ and the former DCI and DDCI; in view of the generally positive effect the program has had since its inception; and having identified no more effective means of conveying Agency management concerns in this area, the Task Force has concluded that the soundest

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measure of recognition for language specialists in Option A--that is, the Language Incentive Program now in force. The Task Force further recommends continuation of the provision for annual review of the LIP by the Language Development Committee as stated 6 September 25X1 1979. This will provide an occasion for a deliberate review of the performance of the program over a longer period of time to determine 25X1 whether and if so to what extent, the concerns may have been valid. 25X1